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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 000692

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [CA](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ/UNSC: CANADA STILL WORKING - AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS - TO "BRIDGE THE DIVIDE"

REF: (A) USUN NEW YORK 656 (B) OTTAWA 589

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Stephen R. Kelly,
Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) As seen from Canada's proposal for a new UNSC resolution on Iraq (reftel A), the GoC continues to be active in seeking a compromise solution at the Security Council. Officials at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Privy Council Office (PCO), and Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) have confirmed to us that GoC efforts on Iraq are being personally handled by Prime Minister Jean Chretien, PCO Foreign Policy Advisor Claude Laverdure, and Canada's Ambassador to the UN Paul Heinbecker. PMO's Paul Genet told the DCM that Laverdure has the lead on Iraq. DFAIT's Jon Allen told us that Heinbecker had been "chomping at the bit" to put forward a Canadian proposal at the UN. PCO's Rob Fonberg (protect) told the DCM "there is no question that the Prime Minister is in the lead," but that the Iraq file is being handled primarily by PCO, with only limited input by DFAIT. Fonberg also speculated that Clerk of the Privy Council Alex Himelfarb, a staunch multilateralist, has been advising Chretien not to do anything in Iraq without UN support, or perhaps even with it.

2. (C) Commodore Dan McNeil, Laverdure's Director of Operations and Strategic Planning, told us that the Prime Minister continues to be heavily engaged in lobbying Security Council heads of state. Chretien spoke again with British Prime Minister Blair on March 12, and was to speak again later that day with Chilean President Lagos and Mexican President Fox. McNeil expressed concern that Lagos might support the French position, which Canada found unacceptable, and that Mexico was considering a proposal for the UN to deploy 50,000 blue helmets in Iraq.

3. (C) McNeil reiterated to us that Canada's objectives are (1) disarmament of Iraq and (2) the Security Council living up to its obligations. Canada knows the U.S. cannot keep its military forces in a holding pattern much longer, he continued, and Canada's proposal sets a concrete deadline for action (April 15) if Iraq does not meet disarmament targets. McNeil said Chretien recognizes war is now inevitable, but that he must reckon with anti-war sentiment in Canada, including in his own Cabinet.

4. (C) COMMENT: While Chretien realizes we do not support the GoC proposal, he sees the need for a UNSC compromise and will remain personally engaged to try to achieve it. Given France's determination to veto any resolution sanctioning military action, Canada's best hope now is for a resolution supported by most Security Council members. Like the British, Canada would seize upon such a vote as expressing the will of the Security Council, albeit without passage due to veto.

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